

JNRCS gives needy children JD 180,000 in four months

Jordan observes Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — "Dignity for all — focus on children" is the theme of this year's world Red Cross and Red Crescent Day which will be observed in the Kingdom by the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS).

A society statement said that this year's anniversary, which falls on May 8, also marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The statement noted that the day will be observed by 161 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies which have 124 million individual members and 350,000 employees around the world.

The JNRCS has prepared a full programme to orient the public in Jordan on the international humanitarian law through meetings and seminars for groups of youth and students around the country.

JNRCS has extended invitations to 260 children from around the country to visit the society headquarters in Amman where they will receive kits containing clothes, sweets, stationery and leaflets depicting the society's activities, said the statement.

The function, to take place on June 9, is part of the society's ongoing assistance to the needy children, which, for four months, has amounted to JD180,000 in value, said the statement.

Quoting a statement issued jointly by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the society said that 300 million people a year may be affected by disasters by the year 2000, noting that the strategic work plan for the 1990s details the federation's work in order to increase its capacity to improve the situation of the most vulnerable.

Although the banning of certain arms, such as landmines and blind weapons, can limit violence, effective measures must also be taken in peacetime, said the joint statement.

Widespread knowledge of international humanitarian law is essential to ensure that these fundamental rules are fully respected and implemented in times of conflict, the statement added.

It pledged that every member of the movement would continue to combat the suffering in this world and appealed to the public for help because, it said, everyone can contribute to a better world by respecting the rights, identity and dignity of others.

Ministry of Agriculture warns against forest fires

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture Tuesday issued a statement to the public warning of the danger of fires, which annually destroy 30,000 trees, saying that the incidence of fires is higher between May and August, the dry and hot season.

The warning came from Ghaleb Abn Orrabi, the ministry's secretary general, who said the civil defence last year had to deal with 54 forest fires that occurred on 1,299 dunums of land in different governorates.

This is a great loss for a country with limited means like Jordan which has 40 million trees planted on 750,000 dunums of land, said Mr. Orrabi in a statement.

He said that the forests located in the governorates of Amman, Balqa, Irbid, Mafrq, Zarqa and Karak, are mostly exposed to the danger of fires which are usually caused by

cigarettes thrown from passing cars, fires lit by people picnicking or farmers burning the remains of their products.

Mr. Abu Orrabi said that during the summer many of the fires also happen because of pieces of glass left on the dry grass which can start a flame under the heat of the sun.

Referring to the Ministry of Agriculture's measures to prevent the spread of fires, Mr. Abu Orrabi said that teams of workers have been entrusted with the task of removing dry grass within the forests and alongside the main roads, starting this month.

Urging the public to report the fires as soon as they are spotted, Mr. Abu Orrabi said that the ministry was enlisting the help of various organisations and Jordanian citizens to help achieve the goal of "a green Jordan" by the year 2000.

Kingdom still at low end of AIDS cases list

Workshop to prepare plan for combatting deadly disease

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Health Ministry Tuesday embarked on a workshop designed to prepare a national Jordanian plan for combatting AIDS in the coming five years although the Kingdom is still classified among nations with very low rates of AIDS cases.

"We are working on a medium-range plan for the 1994-1999 period aimed at promoting awareness mainly among the youth on how to

combat the spread of AIDS in Jordan," said Dr. Saad Kharabsheh in a statement to the Jordan Times.

The new plan, part of which will be covered financially and technically by the WHO, hinges on a wide scale campaign to spread awareness among the youth through leaflets, seminars and other measures, in cooperation with universities, health sectors, the media and other concerned parties," said Dr. Kharabsheh, head of the Health Ministry's Communicable Diseases Department.

"Ever since the discovery of the first AIDS case in Jordan, in 1986, the ministry has been launching a series of campaigns to combat the killer disease," he added.

Noting that the total number of AIDS cases in Jordan, affecting Jordanians, now stands at 70, Dr. Kharabsheh said that there have been 30 AIDS cases among non-Jordanians, but they were sent back to their home countries as soon as they were proved to be HIV positive.

"Since the start of 1994 only one AIDS case was registered

among Jordanians and three among foreign nationals," added Dr. Kharabsheh.

He said that over the past five years the Health Ministry tested the blood of nearly half a million people wishing to donate blood and found only 10 HIV positive cases among those tested.

"This is a clear indication that the Kingdom is one of those nations with a very low rate of AIDS cases, but this does not mean that we should be satisfied and fail to carry out campaigns against the disease," added Dr. Kharabsheh.

However, he said that most of the AIDS cases have been proved to be those of people who have spent some time

abroad either as expatriate workers or students.

The two-day workshop at the Amman Ambassador Hotel was opened by Acting Minister of Health Tareq Subeimat who stressed that there was need for intensive efforts on the part of governments worldwide, as well as concerned organisations and societies, to help fight the disease.

The Health Ministry's strategy in combating the AIDS, he said, is based on programmes for spreading awareness among the youth about ways to protect themselves from the disease and by controlling the blood transfusion and blood donation pro-

cesses in the Kingdom.

According to Dr. Omar Suleiman, the WHO representative at the workshop, the world AIDS cases are now estimated to stand at three million, mostly in Africa and Vietnam.

Participants in the workshop, representing various health sectors and other organisations, will review working papers which, among other topics, will cover epidemiological control, management of a national awareness programme, studies on youth sectors most exposed to AIDS, social and economic patterns that expose the youth to AIDS and obstacles to spreading awareness.

Soccer hooligans face charges

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — More than 20 people are expected to go on trial on charges related to the April 23 rioting at Amman International Stadium, security sources and sources familiar with the affair said Tuesday.

Official police sources would only confirm that investigations related to the cases have been completed and the results sent to "the proper authorities."

But other sources said around 25 people, arrested during the rampage by fans of the Al Faisali and Al Wihdat clubs, were expected to be tried charged with rioting and damaging public property.

Among those detained were two Al Wihdat and one Al Faisali player, who are among those released on bail.

"A few remain in detention pending trial, which is expected to start soon," said one security source.

But sources at the Wihdat and Faisali clubs said they were told that there will not be any criminal trials related to the riots.

Hisham Abdul Monem, a Wihdat player who was in-

involved in the incident that sparked the fan violence, said he was hailed out of detention a few days ago.

"The matter is finished and settled as far I know," Abdul Monem told the Jordan Times.

Independent sources said no charges were expected to be pressed against any of the players, but those detained for outright violence at the stadium during the 45-minute melee were expected to face trial.

Meanwhile, both Faisali and Wihdat clubs said they would not allow the incident to leave scars in their relationship.

"It was regretful that such an incident happened," said a Wihdat member. "It cast a cloud on the entire soccer scene in Jordan, but we are determined not to let it linger."

A Faisali official said: "The entire episode is a closed chapter. The less said about it the better."

Similar reconciliatory mood was also evident in remarks by players carried in the local press.

Wihdat goalkeeper Nasser Ghandour, who was reportedly attacked on his way home after the violence, was quoted by a local newspaper that he was

not pressing charges against anyone.

It was one of the rare cases of mob violence at soccer games in Jordan. More than 100 people were injured during the incident. The Amman International Stadium suffered damages which its director Issam Arida estimated at that time to be between JD 7,000 and JD 8,000.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and senior officials deplored the violence and called on Jordanians to live up to the spirit of sportsmanship.

The Jordan Football Federation adopted disciplinary action against both clubs. Two players from Al Wihdat and one player from Al Faisali were barred for life; several others were barred from several games; and the two clubs were asked to pay damages to the stadium.

Sports officials said the damages were to be reduced from the allocations to the two clubs from the proceeds from gate collections for the season.

The rampage was not limited to the stadium. Fans attacked the premises of Al Wihdat clubs and caused extensive damages to its facilities.

Wihdat officials said they knew most of those responsible for the violence but declined to say whether they planned legal action against them.

"We are handling the affair as an internal matter of the club," said one of the officials.

Cabinet names Abbadi to lead pilgrimage mission

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Tuesday formed the official Jordanian pilgrimage mission to be headed by Minister of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi.

The pilgrimage season will end around May 20 with the celebration of Eid Al Adha. The Cabinet was briefed by

Minister of Water and Irrigation Hisham Al Khatib on measures taken for the utilisation of the water resources in the Azraq Basin.

The government said last month that excessive pumping of underground water was fast depleting the Azraq water resources, causing an ecological imbalance.

Conference stresses need for enforcement of environment legislation, international cooperation

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The human being's right to live in a clean and safe environment was the main call of participants at a conference held Tuesday, entitled "International environmental law."

"It is the basic right of all human beings to live in a safe and clean environment," said Ahmad Obeidat, president of the Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution (JSCEP), addressing the opening session of the two-day conference.

Mr. Obeidat stressed the need for international cooperation that should ensure that this inherited right is enjoyed by everyone.

Mr. Obeidat pointed to Principle 1 of the Rio declaration which states the following: "Human beings are the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life."

He called for new methods and approaches regarding legislation and regulations to be implemented, acknowledging the fact that tradi-

tional methods in solving environmental problems are no longer sufficient.

"Economic reform, especially in the developing countries," Mr. Obeidat added, "should go hand in hand with the environmental reform."

"We need to create environmental strategic plans that link and balance economic development with environmental preservation, using regulatory and market incentives which run side by side with penalties," he said.

In the past, Mr. Obeidat said, environmental protection was of little importance in social and economic management in the Kingdom, "but times have changed as Jordan is now one of the pioneer countries in the Middle East to formulate a national strategy for the environment."

He said Jordan has drawn up regulations to protect the environment and has worked out environmental strategies to maintain a balance between economic and environmental development.

Mr. Obeidat said that until now there has never been a detailed and comprehensive

legislation dealing directly with the environment in all its aspects.

Three institutions, the Jordan Environment Society, the German Friendship Foundation and the Goethe Institut organised the conference to highlight and bring to the attention of the Arab World the importance of cooperation and coordination in this important field by making use of the European Union countries' experience.

The organisers invited specialised people from Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco and Turkey.

Walter Rudel, Friedrich Naumann's representative, voiced concern over violations regarding toxic waste. "Although a law was implemented still, toxic waste is being dumped unsafely," he said, calling on all developing countries to cooperate together and with other organisations.

"It takes two, and developing countries should sign agreements to come up with an international understanding," Mr. Rudel told the spe-

cialists during a brief discussion.

"Human beings are not living up to the ethical requirements of responsibility and accountability needed in our scientifically and economically highly potential world," he said, referring to national strategies. "Governments have to interfere and provide legal protection and effective law-enforcement to the world's and every nation's endangered environment," he added.

"Unfortunately, laws are not taken seriously by most governments, and the development, improvement and enforcement of environmental law are still not efficiently handled by the legislators," said Mr. Rudel.

He warned of the consequences that will follow if legislations were not implemented and used properly and that will further endanger the already fragile sustainability of development and the conservation and protection of nature, calling on countries to develop their environmental policies, legislation and instruments of law enforcement.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

★ Film in Spanish entitled "El Rey Pasmado" at the Spanish Cultural Centre at 6:30 (Tel. 613077).

CONCERT

★ Concert (by the National Music Institute) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

★ Lecture entitled "The Egyptian Art of Graphics" by artist Atiyah Hussein at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman in Jabal Lweibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL FESTIVAL

★ Poetry recital festival attended by students of Jordanian universities at the National Amman University auditorium at 4:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by artists Walid Sheet and Hazem Hamed at Alfa Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

★ "Exhibition of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Food Industries '94" at the World Exhibition Centre, University Road (Tel. 837218, 847113).

★ Art exhibition by five Egyptian artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweibdeh. Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 56 Arab contemporary artists (Tel. 643251/2).

★ Exhibition by artist Mohammad Muharradin at Ab'ad Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Touni at Baladna Art Gallery. (Tel. 687598).

★ Exhibition by artists Dr. Ali Ghoni, Hussein Da'sh, Adnan Al Sharif, Abdul Hussein Tawaj, Salman Abbas, and Hafez Al Droubi at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

★ Jordanian-Iraqi contemporary exhibition by over 80 artists at Alm Art Gallery in Wadi Sagra (9:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 644451).

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

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Coloured rights or blinded vision?

THE "ASSASSINATION" of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana last month in a rocket attack on his plane may have triggered the recent tide of mass killing in the country between the Hutus majority and the Tutsis minority. Yet the seeds of the conflict in the African country that took the lives of no less than 100,000 in a span of few weeks were sown well before the creation and independence of Rwanda when tribal loyalties were the backbone of the Rwandan society. No real efforts were made by the Belgian colonial power that ruled the country prior to its independence to establish a Rwandan society transcending tribal loyalties. The primary blame rests nevertheless with the two major tribes in the country which continued to promote division on tribal grounds even after they gained their freedom and realised their political independence. No amount of external pressures can ever replace domestic action to establish a modern society in any given country where citizenship rights are given contemporary expression.

Now, it seems, the Rwandans are paying a heavy price for neglecting an internal crisis that was left for too long to fester. No wonder the first opportunity to ignite the tribal tension in the country exploded with a vengeance and on a scale unheard of in recent times.

Rwanda is also part and parcel of the international community which should not have stayed aloof of the bloody massacres that have occurred rather systematically ever since the shooting down of Habyarimana. The seemingly callous attitude towards the tragic events that were unfolding in the Central African country is simply inexcusable. When the infighting took such a heavy toll on the lives of the Rwandan people, the international community should have intervened in an effective way. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) should have been the first to take a meaningful initiative to stop the indiscriminate killings. No such action was taken. And when U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali called for an immediate military intervention to stop the "genocide" warfare between the Hutus and the Tutsis, the major powers of the world were hardly moved as if the lives of black Africans are too insignificant as to arouse interest or concern on a global scale.

The irony in this and similar episodes is that we all talk so feverishly of human rights and how individual human rights are worth fighting for and defending at all costs. But when the lives of hundreds of thousands are at stake, no similar international outcry is made. The Western powers which rightly make a habit of ostracising nations that flout individual human rights remain studiously silent.

Now it is Rwanda where bloody tribal warfare has taken place. Earlier it was Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. Kenya and Nigeria do not fare much better either. Most developing countries are afflicted with similar time bombs. The real culprits are those of us who still promote distinctions between people on the basis of race, colour, religion, tribe or ethnic origin.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday criticised the Palestinian-Israeli economic agreement concluded in Paris this week because, he said, it does not help fulfil the national aspirations of the Palestinian people on the one hand and it tends to separate the Palestinians from the Jordanians on the other. The agreement signed in Paris on April 29 represented a Palestinian retreat from an economic agreement with Jordan and is tantamount to ending ties with Jordan unilaterally, said Fahd Al Fanek. While the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement signed in January 1994 clearly states that the Jordanian dinar remains the official currency during the Palestinian autonomy rule, the Paris agreement stipulates that the Israeli shekel is the main currency, said the writer. While the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement provides for the Jordan Central Bank to remain in control of banks operating in the West Bank, the Paris accord states that the Palestinians will set up their own institution to supervise monetary questions and banks operations, he added. While the agreement with Jordan stipulates trade exchanges with the Kingdom, the Paris accord sets up a joint Israeli-Palestinian customs office to control imports and exports operations, which means that trade affairs remain under Israeli control, said the writer. In short, he said, the Paris agreement sacrificed the Palestinian economic interests with Jordan and subjugated the Palestinian economy to Israel's desires.

AHMAD DABBAS, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily, Tuesday addressed the rising number of road accidents and reckless driving that has been causing so many losses in life and property. It is painful to see Jordanians observing World Traffic Day, which is occasion to co-template measures to reduce accidents at a time when reports speak of a sharp increase in the number of those killed or injured on the road, said the writer. It is perhaps a coincidence that when traffic day is observed, 10 more people are killed and many more injured in one road accident, and it is regrettable to say that this incident is only one more in a long chain of accidents which our roads witness almost daily, he said. The writer said that the concerned authorities have a duty to impose very strict and deterrent penalties on reckless drivers so as to stem further tragedies and stop the carnage.

WASHINGTON WATCH

U.S. under pressure to end suffering of Iraqi people

By Dr. James Zogby

AS U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said last week, the U.S. administration adamantly refuses to lift the economic sanctions imposed against Iraq. The U.S. has taken this stand in the face of pressure from France, Russia, and other allies which have argued that the sanctions be eased in response to reports of widespread malnutrition and untreated diseases in all parts of the country.

While the U.S. administration holds firm in its sanctions policy, there is growing concern in Congress and among a number of U.S. non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that some action must be taken to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. These organisations, including religious and human rights organisations, realise that the sanctions, which were meant to punish the Iraqi government, are instead doing much more to hurt the people of Iraq.

In none of the proposals offered by these groups is the suggestion that sanctions be lifted, for to do so would, in effect, reward the Iraqi regime.

So instead of calling for a lifting of the sanctions, these

U.S. groups are calling for alternative approaches to meet the needs of the Iraqi people without appearing to appease the Iraqi regime.

For example, the spokesman for the powerful U.S. Catholic Conference argued in a recent letter to the U.S. Department of State that: "We understand that the Iraqi government, while seeking to have the sanctions lifted, has resisted using the existing exemptions to relieve the suffering of its own people and that it is not in compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. Still, we believe action must be taken to relieve the suffering of Iraqi civilians resulting from the sanctions regime."

"In the face of the failure of the Iraqi government to serve the basic interests of its people, the international community has a continuing responsibility to find ways to prevent unnecessary deaths and unmerited suffering on the part of the Iraqi people."

The responsibility of the international community and of the United States does not end with (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's) refusal to use the existing exemption provisions. Means must be found in the short term for

Iraq and in the long term for humane provisions for the populations of other rogue states placed under U.N. sanctions."

A congressional resolution on emergency food and medical relief, which was offered two years ago, by Congressman Tim Penny of Minnesota, is being offered once again this year. The earlier Penny resolution called on the U.S. and other member nations of the U.N. to use some of the \$3 billion in frozen Iraqi assets to purchase food and medicine, and to distribute the supplies through U.N. agencies on the ground in Iraq.

Other powerful members of Congress, including members of the increasingly influential Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), are also searching for methods to get food and medicine to the people in Iraq who need it, while maintaining the sanctions regime.

A number of assumptions under the proposals being offered by advocates of relief for the Iraqi people.

First, as I have mentioned, since they believe that the Iraqi regime refuses to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions, it should therefore not be rewarded with a

lifting of the sanctions. Both an Iraqi-American association and the Arab-American Medical Association have agreed in a report that having "watched the torment of their family and friends in Iraq they have no illusion that the Iraqi regime would use funds (derived from ending the sanctions) for humanitarian ends."

These groups, therefore, do not believe that ending the sanctions would have the immediate effect of helping all the people of Iraq, as much as it would benefit the government and allow it to pursue its own ends.

Notably, as the Iraqi regime refused to honour U.N. Security Council Resolution 688, 706 and 712. This lack of resolve on the part of the international community to provide the same guarantees for humanitarian needs as it does for security needs is what has provoked a response from U.S. religious and human rights organisations.

In fact, some of these U.S. groups are calling on the U.S. return to the Security Council and seek a new resolution that would force implementation of Resolutions 706 and 712. Just as the Security Council's actions essentially

ensure a fair and equitable distribution of food and medicine to all parts of the country and all groups in Iraqi society. This the Iraqi regime refuses to accept, and so the exemption provided by the resolutions goes unutilised.

The American groups calling for a new humanitarian policy towards the people of Iraq also feel that while it is clear that the Security Council has taken firm action to ensure that Iraq complies with its resolutions relating to the monitoring and dismantling of weapons of mass destruction, the U.N. has not been used to enforce the key provisions of Resolutions 688, 706 and 712. This lack of resolve on the part of the international community to provide the same guarantees for humanitarian needs as it does for security needs is what has provoked a response from U.S. religious and human rights organisations.

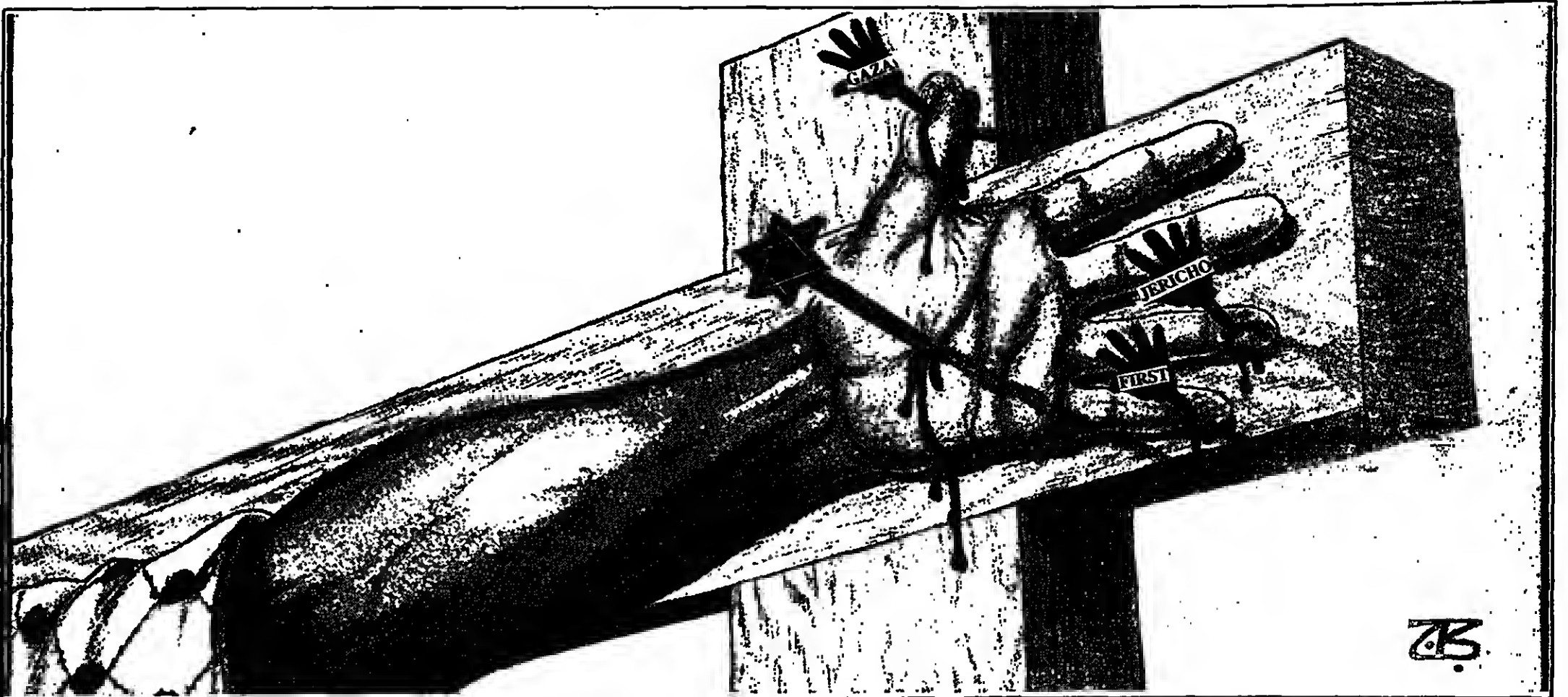
In fact, some of these U.S. groups are calling on the U.S. return to the Security Council and seek a new resolution that would force implementation of Resolutions 706 and 712. Just as the Security Council's actions essentially

forced Iraq to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction and nuclear programme, it is felt that the U.N. could similarly act to force Iraq to accept an on-the-ground humanitarian relief campaign to aid the Iraqi people.

If Iraq refuses this or interferes with U.N. efforts, it would be exposed for denying food and medicine to its own people. By imposing such a programme the U.N. would be able to get the needed help to the Iraqi people. The effort would be helpful to the Iraqi people in ways that the international community has not been helpful until now.

And so it is that in the face of reports of increased suffering of the Iraqi people some members of the U.S. Congress and NGOs, are searching for a way to maintain the sanctions while addressing the genuine needs of the Iraqi people. It is their stand that a people should not pay the price for the sins of the government, and that for far too long the world has turned a blind eye to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab-American Institute.



Speaking out against the insanity of Israeli settlements in Arab lands

By David Harris

SEVERAL YEARS ago, I sat in a Sunday school class as we discussed the holy land, a topic which was of particular interest to me at the time, since I had just recently returned to the United States from a six-month study programme in Jerusalem. At one point, one of the young men in attendance raised his hand to state his opinion that only crazy people would spend so much time and energy fighting over what he considered to be a worthless little patch of sand. He was merely trying to point out the absurdity of killing in order to gain control of religious sites when the very purpose of religion is to reconcile human beings with their fellowmen and with God. And his point was well made. What he didn't consider, however, was that for many people, both Palestinians and Israelis, this is the only place they have, and that if they didn't fight to keep it, they would be forever refugees at the mercy of foreign governments, some cruel, some kind, and some just plain indifferent.

Now, with the massacre at the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron still fresh in our minds, it occurs to me that it's time to speak out against the insanity of illegal settlements like Kiryat Arba, which are nothing but enclaves of a new American colonialism that is slowly reaching out to engulf an entire nation. It is clear to me that no man or woman of sound mind would choose to raise his or her family to the hazardous conditions that exist in the West Bank and Gaza today if there were an alternative. There are Palestinians whose roots are there and who would have little or no opportunity to emigrate, even if they wanted

to. And there are Jews that come from the former Soviet Union and other countries with little knowledge of what awaits them there or what alternatives they might have to settling on occupied land that will eventually have to be vacated in order to comply with international law. These groups have my sympathy. Then there are American Jews who come, it seems, as if to summer camp, holding onto their American passports against a day when they may tire of the constant dangers facing a people who steal water and land and other vital resources from their neighbours, or a day when they simply grow weary of life on the dole, subsidised by

"Then there are American Jews who come (to the occupied territories), it seems, as if to summer camp, holding onto their American passports against a day when they may tire of the constant dangers facing a people who steal water and land and other vital resources from their neighbours."

Western governments and other generous philanthropists to ends that no rational human being can pretend to comprehend. These people have more freedom and more rights, more safety and more security in America than perhaps in any other country on the face of the globe. Yet they feel compelled to go and place themselves and their children at risk in a land where the dispossessed native inhabitants have a legitimate right to be taking up arms against them. But the worst of it is that they offer the Arabs yet one more reason to disdain America and our infuriating double standards. It is my firm belief that we must act now to sever ties

between the United States government and American passport holders living in illegal Israeli settlements. After all, how can we be considered a truly disinterested party in the peace process when our own citizens are among the obstacles to such a peace? I believe a grace period of one year should be extended to such individuals during which time they would be required to decide whether they desired to remain in the occupied territories or return to the United States. After the year was up, their passports would be revoked and transferred to eligible Palestinians who would otherwise have no alternative but to stay and

more justly distribute the available water in the region between all deserving parties. I see no reason why it should be in our interest to do anything less. Are we worried about losing an ally in the region? An ally who was nothing but a liability to us during the recent Gulf War? An ally who, as has been convincingly demonstrated, deliberately bombed the American destroyer Liberty in 1967? An ally who continues to stand in the way of good relations, economic and otherwise, with a vast portion of global markets?

The time has come for us to realise that the Israelis can stand up for themselves. Indeed, they are quickly becoming the most sought after trainers of drug cartels and other Third World organisations, instructing them in the art of guerrilla warfare and assassination. They have a healthy weapons industry that markets its products all over the world. In short, they are not the dismal wretches that Leon Uris and the like portray in their romantic tales of exiled Jews struggling against all odds. Anyone who has visited the occupied territories and seen the Israeli army in action can attest to this.

I have nothing against Israel. It is a country with interests and aspirations just like any other. But I feel it is high time we used the political clout that we as the only remaining superpower possess to stop the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and solve the problems dividing Israel and the Arab World once and for all. It is the right thing to do and it is very much in our interest to do it now.

The writer is an American student at the University of Jordan.

LETTERS

The spirit of sports

To the Editor:

THE REPULSIVE and distasteful attitude and behaviour of some members of the public at a soccer game last month makes it necessary to educate the public on the vital importance of self-control.

What causes the feelings of the public to run riot at a soccer game? In my opinion, it is the moment when one of the players by word or gesture starts contesting the decision, or to be more precise, the verdict, of the referee. It should be known to all concerned that a referee's decision or verdict is absolute, decisive and conclusive. Any player or a number of players pushing their luck should be disqualified from any future games for a full season.

It is suggested that an advisory committee of experts be formed to look into any violation committed by a referee in running a game. The administration of justice on the football ground is as vital as the administration of justice in a courtroom.

To accept defeat or victory on equal footing is the true spirit of sport.

George N. Saig,
Amman.

Prejudice on African football

To the Editor:

IT SEEMS both Ms. Larter and Mrs. Woodward are prejudice while indirectly attacking African football showing live on JTV. We black Africans in Jordan do appreciate the great effort of the sports staff at JTV and so do many Arab Egyptian soccer fans.

Ms. Larter feels JTV has abandoned American film or European film to transmit black African football. I wonder if she would criticise JTV if it broadcast European football live. In 1992, JTV covered all the European nations football cup in Sweden without anyone voicing dislike.

Once again I congratulate JTV for showing all the matches whether on Channel 1 or Channel 2; huray JTV. Finally, I would like Ms. Larter to know the importance of African football; notice that it's not only JTV but the entire world has broadcast African football, and I have proof for that.

Amin Gomdah,
Amman.

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Palestinian company decides to raise ceiling on investments

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Senior Palestinian financiers and businessmen on Tuesday decided to lift the ceilings for investment previously applied to the Palestine Development and Investment Incorporated (PDII), one of the investors said.

The move is intended to broaden the base of the company's investors as well as to harness greater funding for the companies' projects, one of the 16 members of the board of trustees told the Jordan Times after the second meeting of the board.

The move to lower the minimum investment from \$100,000 to \$25,000 and increase the maximum investment from \$2 million to \$4 million came less than 24 hours before Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat was to sign the first phase of the autonomy agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Cairo.

Several members of the board of trustees flew to Cairo late Tuesday to discuss the economic agreement that the PLO concluded with the Israelis last week.

The PDII, which is composed of mostly Palestinian and Jordanian investors, intends to be the key player in revitalising the Palestinian economy. One of the companies' "silent agendas" is to increase the economic interaction between Jordan and the proposed autonomous

areas. Tuesday's decision to remove the investment ceilings was part of an attempt to raise a \$100 million which the company still needs to reach its goal of a \$200 million capital.

An added incentive to invest will be that investors will only have to pay 20 per cent of the amount they intend to invest in the initial stages.

The group hopes to have raised the \$100 million by the end of June, a member of the board of trustees said.

"We now have to meet often to get the administrative infrastructure into place," said the member of the board, who preferred anonymity.

"If we have raised \$200 million we can start on our projects. But the feasibility studies are still in the process of being conducted," he said.

PDII members say that with a capital of \$200 million the company will be working with a possible budget of about \$1 billion.

Regional and International organisations including Japanese and German investors have approached PDII and showed interest in investing in the company — a move that PDII welcomed.

PDII investors say they hope to turn around much of the neglected infrastructure existing in the West Bank and Gaza and modernise it and build new living areas.

"We want to build complexes which will include anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 living units along with

schools, hospitals and all the infrastructure that is needed for that kind of endeavour," the board member said.

Israeli companies have already approached Palestinian investors about supplying raw material for infrastructure.

The Palestinian investors are remaining very tightlipped about where they will buy their raw materials from but insiders say that a serious attempt is being made to conclude deals with Jordanian industries to provide materials needed for industries in the occupied territories.

Subsidiary companies, specialised in industrial projects, construction and real estate and tourism as well as residential development are in the process of being created, the board member said.

"Our initial concern is to ensure that our projects are job creating and export-oriented," he said.

PDII was launched in March by a group of prominent Palestinian businessmen the off-shore company with a capital of \$100 million. The 141-member company elected Jordanian businessman Kamal Shaer as the chairman of their 16-member board of directors.

PDII is the first large-scale private sector bid to inject capital into the strained economy of the Israeli-occupied territories.

The founding investors constitute the financial backbone of much of the Palestinian community in the diaspora. They include chair-

man of the Arab Bank group Abdul Hamid Shoman, Hasib Sabbagh, Sabih Al Masri, Said Khouri, Munib Masri, Ramzi Daloul and Abdul Mohsen Qattan.

Several leaders of the Jordanian business community such as Khalil Al Talbouni, Kamal Shaer, Khaldoun Abu Hassan and Jordanian banks such as the Cairo Amman Bank and the Housing Bank are also founding members of the PDII.

The company is registered in Liberia as an off-shore share-holding firm in October 1993. It will remain an off-shore company until the political and economic situation in the occupied territories becomes "more settled," said Rajai Al Masri, spokesman for the cooperative.

PDII will own 49 per cent of its subsidiaries in the West Bank and Gaza. The West Bank based Al Ruwad Investment Group, which is a West Bank registered share-holding company with an initial capital of \$50 million, is the first of several subsidiary companies that PDII hopes to set up.

Those on the board of trustees are: The Arab Bank Ltd. (Abdul Hamid Shoman), the Cairo-Amman Bank (Yazid Mufti), Kamal Shaer, Said Co., Munib Masri, Khaldoun Abu Hassan, Masira Co., Nabile Sarraf, Nabile Shawa Ramzi Daloul, Azmi Abdul Hadi, Nidal Subhian, Riad Sadeq, Hussein Shargawi, Zahi Khouri and the Jordan Housing Bank.

Asian aid bank comes under fire

NICE, France (R) — As delegates Tuesday began their annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a group of critics spoke out against what it says is the bank's failure to do its job — help lift the region out of poverty.

"The institution as a whole has yet to deliver on its professed objectives of poverty alleviation, environmental protection and truly sustainable development," a group of 19 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) said.

According to the bank's own estimates, some 562 million people in Asia are living in poverty, more than twice the

population of the United States. That poverty is often overshadowed by the spectacular success of Asia's booming markets and hidden in statistics showing that the region enjoys an annual average growth rate of a real six to seven per cent.

Matsuo Sato, ADB president since November, has promised a revamp of the 54-member bank by the start of 1995. Described by one aide as a man who does not mince his words, Mr. Sato first wants plans to trim away the 28-year-old institution's bureaucratic fat.

But most importantly, he aims to shift some of the

ADB's focus away from physical infrastructure projects such as roads, power projects and telecommunications to country-by-country social needs such as health, education and the environment.

In a brief meeting with the NGOs Monday, Mr. Sato insisted that an increase of the ADB's capital, which will double its capital stock to \$48 billion, will go ahead.

Agreement on the capital increase was reached in March after months of bitter wrangling between the ADB's members, which include 16 non-regional donor nations. Led by the United States, the donor

nations insisted that the capital increase should be linked to policy changes.

But the NGO group says the ADB should make vast changes before it spends any more money on what it describes as "policies, programmes and projects that cause tremendous environmental, social and economic damage."

"Even after massive infusion of ADB capital into developing member countries over 28 years, the bank itself notes that nearly three-quarters of the world's poor live in Asia," it said. It said some of its projects not only fail on quality but also erode natural resources and displace local communities.

Judge gives green light to Solidere

BEIRUT (R) — A Beirut judge rejected Tuesday a bid by opponents of Lebanon's \$1.8 billion Solidere company to stop it holding a general shareholders' meeting on Thursday.

The decision cleared the way for Solidere, which is being formed to rebuild Beirut's war-devastated centre, to make its second attempt to incorporate itself.

Company officials welcomed the decision and said they were confident Solidere will manage to incorporate itself at the meeting and that trading of its shares on a new Beirut secondary market will start in the second half of May.

This will revive official equities trading in Beirut for the first time since 1984 when the Beirut Stock Exchange closed down during the 1975-90 civil war.

Lebanese officials say Solidere is the biggest private corporation in the Middle East and the project is billed as the biggest urban development project of the 1990s.

However, delays in incorporation since its successful \$650 million share subscription closed on Jan. 10 have prevented the project getting under way.

A group of 13 owners of

property rights in the city centre who oppose the project had asked the Beirut court of urgent pleas to declare the summoning of the shareholders' meeting illegal.

The one million square metres (400 acres) to be developed has been valued at \$1.18 billion. Former owners and tenants are to be given Solidere shares totalling that amount in exchange for their rights but many have not yet received the shares.

Ecuador, creditors reach debt accord

NEW YORK (R) — Ecuador and its creditor banks Monday reached a landmark foreign debt agreement that will restructure the country's payments on its \$7.6 billion in debt and overdue interest over the next 30 years.

The agreement, by which banks will be able to swap their Ecuadorian debt for bonds at a 45 per cent discount, lets the Andean nation rejoin international financial markets fully for the first time since it halted debt payments in May 1992.

Reached after long and tortuous negotiations, the accord was unveiled simultaneously in New York by the bank's steering

committee and in Ecuador by President Sixto Duran Ballen in a televised speech.

"After 12 years of debt crisis and several years of difficult negotiations, this agreement will normalise the country's relations with its private creditors," said Finance Minister Cesar Robalino in a statement issued in New York.

The chairman of the steering committee, Lloyds Bank PLC Senior Vice President William Camposano, signed for the banks.

Under the pact, creditors will be allowed to swap the principal amount of their loans to Ecuador for either discount

bonds or par bonds, both dollar-denominated and both with 30-year U.S. Treasury bonds as collateral.

The discount bonds will be exchanged for existing loans at a discount of 45 per cent from the face value of the debt.

The country will resume interest payments on the debt, but with payments restructured over 20 years and after a 10-year grace period.

The agreement lets Ecuador join the ranks of Latin American nations that have eased their debt burden through the so-called Brady plan, which lets creditors swap debt for

open-market bonds at a discount.

Expectations that the agreement was imminent have helped boost prices for Ecuadorian debt on the secondary debt market in New York and Loodoo for over a week.

The two sides announced the agreement as support for President Duran Ballen's free-market economic reform measures has been slipping badly.

The ruling parties lost all but 10 of their 37 seats in congressional elections Sunday which opposition nation took as a public rejection of the government's economic policies.

Cuba to crack down on illegal riches

HAVANA (R) — President Fidel Castro announced plans Monday to crack down on people getting rich illegally during the country's economic crunch.

President Castro, speaking at the end of a two-day extraordinary session of parliament on the economy, said a new law providing for confiscation of goods acquired by illicit means had been drawn up and would be approved by the council of state this week. He gave no details of the law.

An unanswered question is exactly how wide the net will be cast over people making money illegally in a country where, despite formal state control of production and distribution, the underground economy is thriving.

Many deputies at the national assembly session had called for action against black marketers and other illegal traders, viewed as the scourge of the honest citizen battling to make ends meet. President Castro's announcement was greeted with loud applause.

The move was just one the parliament called for in a document that gave the government

the go-ahead for a wide range of moves to reduce the amount of pesos in circulation and reduce a huge budget deficit.

The document approved, in general terms, plans to introduce price increases on cigarettes and alcohol and services like electricity and transport, and to stimulate savings and ensure they stayed in banks.

It also suggested some form of control over circulation of hard currency, reduction of subsidies to money-losing state enterprises, the gradual introduction of some income taxes and a possible future change to the Cuban Peso.

On Sunday, President Castro told parliament that there could be no half measures to attack the "cancer" of excess currency in circulation and give money and salaries back their buying power.

Finance Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez, also speaking on Sunday, suggested creating special savings accounts that would allow money in banks to be frozen for a fixed period, and issuing state bonds.

And he proposed issuing a convertible peso to allow the state greater control over hard currency such as the U.S. dollar in circulation.

The official exchange rate for the peso is one per dollar, although the peso changes hands for around 100 times less than this on the black market. The dollar, whose use was legalised last year, is now widely used on the black market.

Most Cubans rail against the underground economy, which is supplied by theft from state stores and illegal buying and

selling of state distributed goods such as farm produce.

But with state goods reduced to a minimum, most people also admit they have to resort to illicit traders to put adequate food on the family table.

Many workers are also involved in some illegal dealing to make ends meet — such as the worker who has a right to four packs of heavily subsidised cigarettes a month but doesn't smoke and sells them for up to 100 times their state price on the street.

Japanese firms plan cuts

TOKYO (AFP) — Major Japanese companies plan to cut investments in plant for a third straight year, despite some encouraging signs in key sectors, a study has said.

The Economic Planning Agency (EPA) study said the expected reduction would follow a 9.2 per cent cut in investment in industrial buildings and machinery in the fiscal year just ended, after a 10.3

per cent decline the preceding year.

The downturn is expected to be especially sharp (41.8 per cent) in publishing and printing and in construction (28.3 per cent).

However, the crucial automobile industry is expected to step up investment by 9.6 per cent after a sharp fall of 26.2 in the last fiscal year.

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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY MAY 4, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Make certain to have your activities well organised today as the Plores Moon square Venus and the Venus square to Saturn at midday can throw a monkey wrench into the best laid plans.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can straighten out business affairs early in the day and get the results you want. Use utmost care in motion today to avoid problems.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) An excellent day to put a new plan in motion. Friends and allies can be very cooperating. Take it easy tonight with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Engage in new outlets that can bring you greater abundance in the days ahead. Take no risks with your reputation or it could be tarnished.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get rid of stumbling blocks in the path of your progress. Make long-range plans that could give you added income for the future.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Handle both career and civic affairs well during the day and later in recreations with congenial friends. Avoid a troublemaker today.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan a new enterprise well so that it can be successful

through added vision. Strive for more harmony with family members.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be sure to keep promises you have made with associates. Take more interest in what your mate is doing and you both will be very happy today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Listen to comments of closest ties and show your best to help them. Do your courtesy at home and avoid a tense situation which could develop.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Use more up-to-date methods where finances are concerned and get better results. Use care in travel so that you will have a wonderful time.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take time to study new projects which could give you added income in the future. Express your finest talents to someone who could help you be a great success.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Look over your surroundings and make plans for improvement. Strive for increased harmony at home with those very special to you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may want to join with friends for a good time but don't forget to handle an important commitment first. Be wise in your decision which are made.

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JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SMIPK
TEAGA
SNEFTA
DRIMBO

Answer here: UP IN (Answers tomorrow)

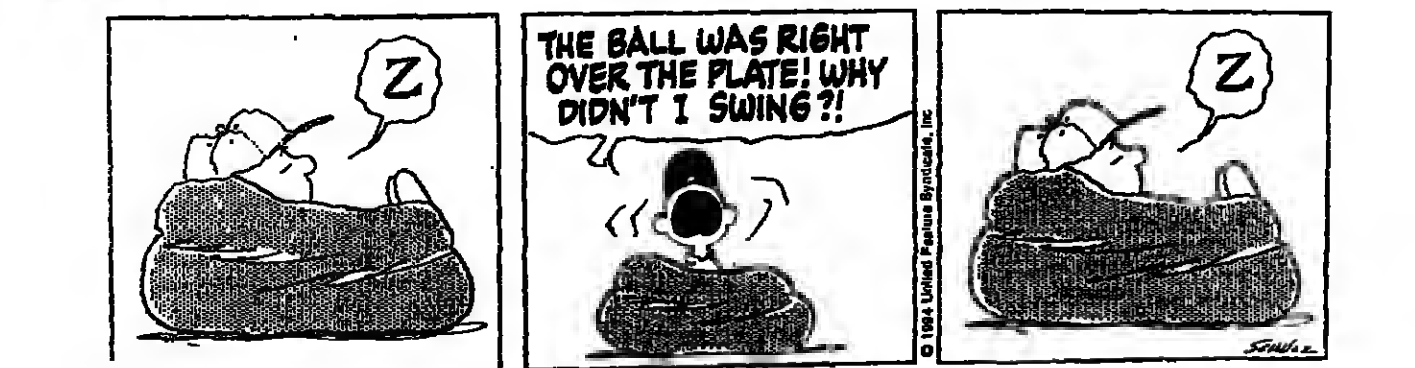
Yesterday's Jumbles: COWER PAYEE DENTAL FEDORA
Answer: She became the chief artist because she was — TOP "DRAW-ER"

THE Daily Crossword by Harold G. Counts

ACROSS
1 Certain son one
6 Leave heavily
10 Practice posing
14 Den
15 Unit of type size
16 Saga
17 Haunted
18 Lines high
19 General's helper
20 Chosen
21 Submerged
23 Worked leather
25 Squares
27 Addict
30 Puntle —, Chile
32 Piece of smart
34 College cheers
35 Short jacket
36 Reptile
40 The Kingdon
41 Domingo, e.g.
42 "Zoo" leader
44 Fine golf score
46 Withered
47 Take — from

48 Card game
50 Light boats
52 Network letters
54 Daring
55 Once more
56 Be certain
58 Catch sight of
60 Bird's bill
63 Upon
64 TV's — Team
66 Trojan —
68 A fountain
69 Smooth
70 Hot spots
71 Otherwise
72 Oat
73 Moves
75 Enviously
76 Neighbor at
78 Knobs
79 News summary
80 Merit
81 Fluster
82 Haphazardly
83 Bargain event
84 Clinging pepper
85 Mrs. HST
86 Ben
87 Eggs

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Akashi discusses total Bosnia truce

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — A U.N. mediator began efforts Tuesday to reach a total ceasefire between Muslims and Serbs and head off an impending battle for control of a strategic Serb corridor across northern Bosnia.

U.N. special envoy Yasushi Akashi was meeting Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo and later Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in nearby Pale.

"The main topic of his discussions will be total ceasefire within Bosnia-Herzegovina", U.N. Protection Force spokesman Eric Chaparro told reporters in Sarajevo.

U.N. sources told Reuters earlier Mr. Akashi would ask the Muslims and Serbs for permission to urgently deploy U.N. observers in the area around Brcko in northern Bosnia where Serbs hold a corridor joining their territories.

Mr. Akashi is racing against time as fears grow that northern Bosnia could become the next flashpoint in the former Yugoslav republic's war following reports of a massive weapons buildup in the area.

The Bosnian Serb-held river valley town of Brcko, mainly Muslim before the war, is in the bottleneck of a northern route that links Serb lands in Bosnia and Croatia to Serbia proper.

The 70 per cent of Bosnian territory Serbs now control resembles a horseshoe and at one point near Brcko it is only five kilometres wide. Muslim

forces are to the south and Croatia lies to the north.

Bosnian government forces commander General Rasim Delic, who visited the area Monday together with Mr. Izetbegovic, said: "Brcko is the key to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

"For our part we shall do everything to see that preparations for the final showdown with the Chetniks (Serb forces) proceed in the best possible way," he said.

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, calling Brcko and its environs a "flashpoint", urged the United Nations to give it the same protective shield as six embattled Muslim-held parts of Bosnia that the world body has declared "safe areas."

Mr. Karadzic rejected the idea: "We would not accept any type of change in the status of Brcko, because Brcko and the corridor is of vital interest for the Serbian nations."

General Sir Michael Rose, commander of U.N. troops in Bosnia, said he would need more troops if the United Nations were to extend its security guarantee to Brcko.

He told a news conference during a meeting of Nordic defence ministers in Denmark: "We already have inadequate resources to sustain the operations we have at the moment. If we took on more safe areas then of course one would expect to have more resources allocated."

A U.N. official in Zagreb

who did not wish to be identified said the world organisation was trying to rush in observers.

"We have signs that all three sides are consolidating troops in the area. We are obviously concerned, and we want U.N. military observers to be deployed there in the next couple of days," he told Reuters.

Sarajevo Radio accused the Serbs of mounting the biggest military build-up since the beginning of the war and said on Tuesday army convoys kept pouring into the area.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA), in turn, claims the Muslims have amassed up to 80,000 soldiers in the area.

The BSA command Tuesday reported an overnight Muslim mortar attack eight kilometres southwest of Brcko to which the Serbs did not respond.

Maj. Chaparro in Sarajevo said Mr. Akashi would also raise with the Serbs the question of Serb "militia" remaining within the three kilometres exclusion zone around Gorazde, as well as Serb violations of the exclusion zone around Sarajevo.

Maj. Chaparro said French troops encountered a Serb tank being moved near the Serb barracks at Lukavica outside Sarajevo Monday in a violation of the Sarajevo exclusion zone.

A NATO ultimatum threatening air strikes helped end a Serb siege around Gorazde last weekend. The Serbs were

ordered to withdraw their infantry from a three kilometre zone around Gorazde and pull their heavy weapons back 20 kilometres.

Another topic would be the convoy of 168 British troops now being prevented from moving by the Serbs at Rogatica, he said.

The British want to go to Gorazde to beef up some 500 U.N. peacekeepers already there, but are now being held at Rogatica. Maj. Chaparro declined to describe them as hostages.

Mr. Akashi said Gorazde was a "precondition, a test case" for U.N. credibility in resolving the Bosnian conflict in talks Tuesday with Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic.

The representative of U.N. chief Boutros Ghali said he would present the U.N. view on obtaining a "complete stabilisation" of the situation in Gorazde when he spoke to Serb officials in Pale.

Mr. Akashi responded defensively to questions concerning a telegram sent to him by Dr. Ghali indicating that high-ranking U.N. officials were making statements critical of United States policy, and that the comments were "unacceptable."

He repeated the official position that U.N. representatives "should refrain from commenting on the policies of member governments." He said he had not considered resigning following Dr. Ghali's implicit rebuke.

Thousands are in hiding throughout Rwanda as fighting continues

NAIROBI, Kenya (Agencies) — Relief agencies worked to reach thousands of hungry, terrified people hiding throughout Rwanda Tuesday as ethnic fighting continued for the 27th day.

Several international efforts were under way to try to negotiate an end to the blood-bath that has killed more than 100,000, and to get aid to an estimated 1.3 million displaced in the tiny central African nation.

Small arms fire was heard Tuesday morning in the capital, Kigali, where civilian gangs and militias still control much of downtown, said U.N. spokesman Abdul Kabia.

He said there are reports that massacres may have diminished in the city, but slaughter and banditry continue in the countryside, particularly in southern areas controlled by the army and militias.

Mr. Kabia said military observers hoped later in the day to evacuate some 300 people sheltering under U.N. protection in Kigali's Milles Colines Hotel.

The United Nations had stationed armoured personnel carriers outside the hotel more than a week ago following reports that the displaced would be massacred. It had been asking the government for

several days to let the people leave.

"We got an agreement yesterday that the people can go to the area of their choice," Mr. Kabia said by phone from Kigali. "I think they want to go home."

U.N. officials estimate that some 20,000 people are sheltering in unguarded churches throughout Kigali as well as in the known U.N. safe havens of the stadium, King Faisal Hospital and two hotels.

Many more are still locked in their homes in the capital, while an estimated 250,000 of the city's 350,000 population have fled, said Emery Brusset, spokesman for the U.N.'s Emergency Humanitarian Effort in Rwanda.

Rwandan rebels and government representatives gathered Tuesday in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, where the United Nations and Tanzania are trying to broker peace talks, diplomats said.

U.N. envoy to Rwanda Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh met separately with both sides to persuade the rebels to open face-to-face talks with the interim government which they do not recognise.

The rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front has ruled out a dialogue with the "government of killers" and said its representa-

tives would go to Arusha only to brief Tanzanian officials on their position in the Rwandan conflict.

Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim and Tanzanian Prime Minister John Malecela, who is to chair the talks, were expected in Arusha later Tuesday, according to diplomats contacted by telephone.

Ten days ago Tanzania failed to bring the two sides to the negotiating table for an earlier round of talks, also in Arusha where the rebel and government signed peace accords last August to end a three-year civil war.

The government delegation failed to turn up, and the rebels said that they would refuse to talk to them even if they did.

But the rebels have agreed to meet military officers to discuss ways to halting the carnage in Rwanda, which has cost more than 100,000 lives since the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana in an April 6 rocket attack on his plane rekindled the war and plunged then tiny Central African country into chaos.

The U.N.'s refugee agency warned Tuesday of a looming health "catastrophe" at a makeshift camp in Tanzania packed with 250,000 hungry Rwandan refugees.

Seoul slams North's armistice pullout

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's newly-appointed unification minister Tuesday slammed as "irresponsible" Communist North Korea's abrupt move to annul the armistice pact which halted the 1950-53 Korean War.

"It is irresponsible behaviour which stifles the current armistice pact," said Lee Hong-Koo, who was appointed last Saturday.

The North last week told United Nations forces stationed in South Korea it would unilaterally pull out of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), which works to maintain peace along the tense 250 kilometre border between the two Koreas.

The North has boycotted MAC meetings since a South Korean general was appointed head of the five-person UNC delegation in March 1991, replacing an American.

North Korea, which has defied the United Nations by refusing to allow full inspection of its nuclear facilities by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officials, last week proposed negotiations with the United States to replace the armistice with a peace agreement.

Mr. Lee said the North must first clear up allegations that it was covertly developing nuclear weapons before taking up the issue of a peace treaty.

"The North must promptly normalise operations of the MAC and cease activities which disrupt peace on the peninsula," he told reporters.

South Korean analysts described the North's withdrawal from the commission as highly political. They said its aim was to divert world attention from a bitter controversy over the North's suspected nuclear programme and seek the upper hand in negotiations with the United States.

"We will soon provide steps to tackle the problem in consultation with the United States," a Foreign Ministry official said.

Foreign Minister Han Sang-Joo told reporters Tuesday the issue of signing a peace treaty was a matter for Seoul and Pyongyang as agreed between the two sides in late 1991.

"The United States is a signatory to the armistice and therefore will get involved in that sense," Mr. Han said.

"But the United States fully agrees with Seoul that the matter is for the two Koreas to

resolve," he said.

The two Koreas signed a non-aggression pact in December 1991 which requires the two sides to take a series of tension-reducing steps, but none of them has been implemented because of the row over the North's nuclear programme.

"The North has been trying to drive a wedge between the South and the United States by extending the South from negotiations on the North's nuclear problem and other issues," said an analyst at the Unification Ministry.

"The primary goal of the Northern regime is to force the withdrawal of U.S. forces in the South by agreeing with the United States to replace the armistice with a peace treaty," he said.

Washington maintains a force of 36,000 men in the south, a legacy of the Korean War, when a U.S.-led United Nations alliance fought off a Northern invasion.

Military commanders from North Korea, the United States and China, which aided the North during the Korean War, were signatories to a military truce that was never converted into a peace treaty.

'House of horror' wife charged with 4th murder

GLOUCESTER, England (R) — The wife of accused serial killer Frederick West was charged Tuesday with a fourth murder in Britain's grisly House of Horror case.

Rosemary West, 40, was remanded in police custody when she appeared briefly in a Gloucester court to be formally charged with the joint murder with her husband of Swiss student Therese Siegenthaler, who disappeared in 1974 aged 21.

Last week, the mother-of-eight was charged, jointly with Mr. West, of murdering three girls in 1973. Mr. West, a 52-year-old builder, has been charged with 10 murders, including his first wife Catherine and his 16-year-old daughter Heather.

Mr. West is also accused of taking part — with two men — in the rape of a teenage girl and with assaulting a seven-year-old boy.

Nine of Mr. West's victims were exhumed from the West family home at 25 Cromwell Street — dubbed the House of Horror by Britain's media — since police began their gruesome investigation at the end of February.

Berlusconi: No fascist ministers in government

ROME (AFP) — Italian Prime Minister-Delegate Silvio Berlusconi has stressed there will be "no fascist ministers" in his government as the risk of fascism "does not correspond to reality" in Italy.

Taking questions late Monday from reporters, Mr. Berlusconi took up the issue which has given Italy's allies cause for concern since the National Alliance, largely made up of elements within the neo-fascist

MSI, polled 13 per cent of the vote in the general election last March.

Along with the Northern League and Mr. Berlusconi's own Forza Italia movement, the National Alliance is set to become a coalition partner in the next Italian government. Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini has defined the organisation as "post-fascist" but has also described Italy's former

fascist leader Benito Mussolini as one of the "greatest political figures" of the century.

Mr. Berlusconi, who Monday began conferring with social groups broadly allied to his movement prior to drawing up a list of potential cabinet ministers, has looked to exclude "fascists" from his administration while taking care not to tar the National Alliance with the fascist label.



SUICIDE DOCTOR FREE: Dr. Jack Kevorkian (centre) makes his way through the media to his attorneys' car after the jury gave him his victory in Detroit's Recorder's Court Monday. Kevorkian was found innocent of assisting in the suicide of Thomas Hyde last summer. Mr. Hyde suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a fatal illness. If convicted, Dr.

Kevorkian could have faced four years in jail and a \$2,000 fine. The 12-member jury, consisting of nine women and three men, deliberated for about 10 hours over a three-day period. Dr. Kevorkian has attended 26 suicides since 1990 in his right-to-die crusade. Three previous cases against Dr. Kevorkian have been thrown out of Michigan courts on constitutional grounds.

Storm kills at least 100 in Bangladesh

DHAKA (R) — A severe storm tearing through south-eastern Bangladesh with driving rain and winds of up to 200 kilometres per hour killed more than 100 people, injured about 500 and left at least 150,000 homeless, officials said Tuesday.

They said the toll could rise when officials and rescue teams, scouring scenes of devastation after Monday night's storm, reported in.

"The magnitude of the disaster is being assessed, and I fear it would be high," said an official at Cox's Bazar.

He said the majority of the dead and injured were Rohingya refugees living in camps near Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, both in the direct path of the vicious storm.

"We have just received the first reports and the toll will definitely rise when the details are available," said Enamul Kabir, deputy commissioner of

Cox's Bazar before he left for Teknaf.

Bangladesh's worst storm in April 1991 killed over 138,000 people along the coast and on about a dozen islands in the Bay of Bengal. It caused property and crop losses of \$3 billion.

Mr. Kabir said Monday's storm destroyed 90 per cent of the houses in Teknaf and on Saint Martin's Island on the bay. "Details are still awaited," he told reporters.

The Kutubdia and Maheshkhali Islands, which suffered the brunt of the 1991 cyclone, were badly hit again, Cox's Bazar officials said without giving details.

The latest storm, spawned in the bay, slammed through Cox's Bazar and neighbouring areas at 175 kilometres per hour, local meteorology officials said.

But it spared the densely-populated Chittagong Port about 150 kilometres away.

The Bangladesh Navy was sending a vessel with medical and relief supplies to St. Martin's Island, a navy spokesman said.

Relief officials said emergency food and medical supplies were being distributed in the badly-hit areas.

Disaster control officials said many areas along the coast were inundated by a sea surge, about six metres high, triggered by the strong winds.

Officials and cyclone preparedness volunteers Monday moved about 400,000 people to safety while thousands more moved out of the area voluntarily.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia called in the army, navy and air force to support relief operations and sent out ministers to coordinate efforts.

"We must pull out all stops to save lives and property," she told a cabinet meeting Monday.

U.S. shows interest in military option on Haiti

WASHINGTON (AP) — With pressure mounting on the Clinton administration to bring an end to the Haiti crisis, U.S. officials are signalling increased interest in the possibility of military action to restore democracy there.

The administration has shied away from military force because of potential U.S. casualties and for an involvement to which no end could be foreseen. With no obvious U.S. strategic interest at stake, support for the military option has been limited.

Publicly, the administration stuck Monday to its longstanding position of refusing to rule out use of military force in Haiti.

"I will say only that we don't find it useful to rule out any option," said White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers.

"The administration has neither ruled in nor out this particular option," deputy State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly said.

Congressional backing for the use of force has been increasing. At a closed hearing last week Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Deputy National Adviser Sandy Berger testified on the point before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

One source familiar with the proceedings said it was apparent that support for consideration of the use of force extends on Capitol Hill beyond a few members of the black Caucus in Congress.

It is not clear, however, whether the signs of increased administration attention to the military option mark a turning point or whether they are

merely intended to scare Haiti's generals into surrendering power. Two published reports in recent days said use of force is being considered.

Ms. Shelly said the administration, for now, is hopeful that pressure will be sufficient to oust the military and a restored President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The focus this week is on the United Nations, where the administration is pushing for tightened international sanctions against Haiti.

Under the proposal, top military and police officials in Haiti would have 15 days to quit or leave before a total economic embargo took effect. The administration has doubted whether an embargo will be sufficient. There is a widespread perception that the embargo hurt common people.

Belgium has freest press — survey

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Belgium enjoys the world's freest press, followed by New Zealand, Australia and Norway, according to a survey released Tuesday by the human rights group Freedom House.

Tied for fifth place were Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland in the survey that looked for "vibrancy, diversity and lack of government encroachment" of the press.

The United States followed, tied with Luxembourg.

The survey titled Press Freedom Worldwide: 1994, gauges the extent to which newspapers, radio and television permit a free flow of ideas to and from the public in 186 countries.

It said the United States lost points because of the increasing dominance of major media groups and said that "skyrocketing costs of publishing and broadcasting" tend to make U.S. editorial content more vulnerable to the influence of ratings and advertising.

Freedom House said the least free press was in Iraq. Others in the bottom echelon were Cuba, Tajikistan, North Korea, Burma, Turkmenistan, Sudan and China.

Of the 186 countries listed, two — Afghanistan and Somalia — were deemed impossible to monitor "because central government has broken down, repression is complete and data are unreliable."

Leonard Sussman, a Freedom House scholar in international communications who was the study coordinator, said: "Although the press in the freest countries is the watchdog over government,

many governments, even in some democracies, are seeking to be watchdogs over the news media."

The study said press freedom peaked worldwide with post-Communist liberalisations in 1989 but has declined since.

The survey covered Jan. 1, 1993 to April 15 of this year and was released on the United Nations' International Press Freedom Day.

Overall, 68 countries, or about 37 per cent, were judged to fall in the broad category of having "free" media, meaning journalists are "nearly free" of political pressure and other interference.

The press was called "partly free" in 64 countries, or 34 per cent, while 54 countries, 29 per cent, were said to have a press that is "not free," indicating a high degree of government control, including frequent physical threats against journalists.

Freedom House said 76 journalists were killed in 27 countries in the period covered by the study.

Freedom House is a New York-based, non-partisan human-rights organisation that monitors political rights and civil liberties around the world. It was funded with a grant from Freedom Forum, a foundation based in Arlington, Virginia, that promotes free press and free speech.

UNESCO marks Press Day

Pictures taken by Associated Press and Reuters photographers slain while working in Somalia went on display at UNESCO headquarters to

mark World Press Freedom Day.

The exhibit, which is travelling around the world, is part of the U.N. Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) effort to celebrate the day worldwide Tuesday.

The display commemorates AP photographer Hansi Krass, Reuters photographers Dan Eldon and Hos Maima, and Reuters television sound technician Anthony Macharia.

They were attacked and killed by an angry crowd last year as they tried to cover the aftermath of a United Nations helicopter assault in the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor inaugurated the exhibit Monday. Called "Images Of Conflict," it displays 20 prints from each of the three photographers and sound recorded by Macharia.

"Journalism has become an increasingly dangerous profession, yet this has not deterred brave men and women from doing their part in the search for truth, the sharing of information, and the building of democracy," Mr. Mayor said.

Elsewhere, UNESCO is also helping unveil a memorial for journalists killed during the Yugoslav civil war, organising a conference on truth in media in Moscow, and holding workshops in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Western Samoa.

Mr. Mayor said that 75 journalists from the print and broadcast media were killed in 1993, 50 of them while covering armed conflict and some by extremist groups.

World Press Freedom Day was declared by the United

Nations General Assembly in 1993 based on a UNESCO resolution stating that an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential for democracy.

Meanwhile the French group Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) said Tuesday, at least 63 journalists were killed in the line of duty in 1993, and some 124 were detained by authorities for expressing their opinions.

At least 30 other journalists were killed last year but it could not be determined whether they were on assignment at the time of their deaths, it said in a 506-page annual report.

The French newsletter Correspondance De La Presse said the 1993 figures compared with 61 journalists killed in 1992 and 123 detained.

RSF said the death comprised nine in Algeria, eight in Bosnia and Russia, four in Colombia, Georgia and Somalia, three in Angola, Mexico, Tajikistan and Turkey, two in India and one in South Africa, Azerbaijan, Britain, Congo, Guatemala, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda and Venezuela.

RSF said in a separate statement that the deaths of two Americans in Bosnia Sunday brought to 17 the number of journalists killed this year.

The 1994 figures comprise six killed in Algeria, five in Bosnia, two in South Africa and Somalia, and one in Egypt and Iraq.

Among the at least 124 journalists detained on Jan. 1 were 21 in China, 15 in Turkey, 10 in Syria, nine in Iraq and Vietnam, eight in Kuwait.

Assault charge against actor dismissed

LOS ANGELES (R) — A judge has dismissed misdemeanor vandalism and assault charges against actor Jack Nicholson, who had been accused of smashing a motorist's windshield with a golf club.

Over the objections of prosecutors, Municipal Court Judge Martin Snits ruled during a court hearing that the victim's complaint had been satisfied by a civil settlement reached with Nicholson in March and that a criminal case was not warranted.

Robert Blank, 38, alleged that while he was stopped at a traffic light, Nicholson got out of his car carrying a golf club and accused him of cutting him off. The Academy Award-winning actor, best known for playing volatile characters in such films as One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and The Shining, then battered the roof of Blank's car with a golf club and smashed his windshield, Mr. Blank said.

Drug hijacker thwarted when car breaks down

BANGKOK (AFP) — A Macao man armed with an AK-47 assault rifle hijacked a Bangkok taxi for a drug delivery, but was caught when the vehicle broke down, police said Tuesday. Lai Sang Po, 28, flagged the cab down in the Lad Prao district of Bangkok Monday, then panicked when the driver asked where to go. Police said he produced the rifle, shoved the driver over the passenger seat, shooting him in the leg in the process.

Lai later explained that he intended to drive to Pattaya, a beach resort area 150 kilometres southeast of Bangkok, to deliver heroin. But the taxi broke down after a few kilometres. Lai fled on foot, firing two shots at pursuing police. But he was eventually overpowered. Police said 1.5 kilograms (three pounds) of heroin was found in his jacket. Press reports said Lai had been living in Thailand illegally.

U.K. firms lose women managers

LONDON (R) — The number of women managers in top British companies has fallen for the first time in 20 years, according to an Institute of Management survey Tuesday. The percentage of women managers had grown steadily from just 1.8 per cent in 1974 to 10.2 per cent in 1993. But the figure has dropped back to 9.5 per cent so far this year. The survey, covering more than 330 British firms, said the number of women section leaders and department heads had fallen and the number of women directors had stayed constant at 1993 levels of 2.8 per cent after a steady increase since 1974. The institute described the survey results as a "shock". Director General Roger Young said: "For years we have been delighted to record women's increasing progress at all levels of management but now they have suffered a setback." He said the reasons were unclear, but suggested some women could be reacting against the non family-friendly policies of some large companies and opting to set up their own firms. The survey also found that women continue to be paid less than male bosses or directors. The average female manager earns \$27,862 (\$42,180), almost \$5,000 (\$7,570) less than her male counterpart, while a woman director's average salary is \$56,000 (\$84,780), almost \$20,000 (\$30,280) less than a male director.

Macau man's organ reattached, wife gone

HONG KONG (R) — The severed penis of a 43-year old man in Macau was successfully reattached in a four-hour operation, the Portuguese News Agency (LUSA) said Tuesday. Hospital sources said "about two-thirds" of Wong Cheong-Do's penis had been cut off before he entered the operating theatre Monday morning, the agency reported. It said the penis was carried to the hospital in a plastic bag by relatives of Mr. Wong, who also suffered wounds to his scrotum and abdomen. The agency said the circumstances surrounding the incident were unclear. It quoted neighbourhood sources as saying the man's wife had "abandoned" him, adding that the couple had shared their flat with two female subtenants. They said Mr. Wong and his wife were construction workers who had frequent "noisy scenes of jealousy". Hospital Mr. Wong was recovering "quite well".

Jordan-Egypt committee meets tomorrow

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee is scheduled to meet here Thursday and Friday for its first meeting in nearly four years after several postponements since early this year.

The meeting will be co-chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and his Egyptian counterpart Atef Sedki and attended by ministers of trade and industry, planning and finance from both sides.

Dr. Sedki and the delegation to the meeting are expected to arrive here Wednesday afternoon, a spokesman for the Egyptian embassy said.

His Majesty King Hussein is expected to receive Dr. Sedki, who will also formally convey President Hosni Mubarak's condolences to the King over the death of Her Majesty Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother,

who passed away last week. President Mubarak was among the Arab leaders who personally contacted King Hussein over the phone to pay condolences immediately after the passing away of the Queen Mother.

The Council of Ministers was briefed Tuesday on preparations for the meeting by experts from both sides who have prepared an agenda as well as recommendations in various areas of cooperation.

No details were immediately available on the recommendations for the two-day meeting, but officials have said that both sides were aiming to increase the volume of trade from the present JD 40 million.

Other key issues for discussion include the status of Egyptian workers in Jordan, students from the two sides in each other's universities, expansion of the work of a joint holding company, as well as a review of the progress of work on linking the national power grids of the two countries.

The joint committee, which last met in July 1990, was supposed to have convened in March. But the meeting was postponed upon the request of the Egyptian government.

The committee is supposed to meet once every six months alternating between the two capitals to chalk out cooperation programmes in economy, labour, energy, tourism, information etc.

But the strain in relations resulting from the Gulf crisis froze the meetings of the committee. The strain was healed after King Hussein paid a visit to Cairo and held talks with President Mubarak late last year.

"Both sides have suffered from the absence of the committee meetings," said an Arab diplomat. "Hopefully this week's meeting will streamline trade and economic relations as well as straighten out cooperation at the regional and international levels."

Another issue for discussion for the committee is the situation of projects related to the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), which went into limbo after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The ACC grouped Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Yemen.

The Egyptian parliament, upon the recommendation of the government, adopted a resolution in December to suspend Egypt's membership in the council.

Several Jordanian-Egyptian projects designed before the formation of the council were expanded to include Iraq and Yemen after the body was founded in 1989.

Mediators in south amid mounting tension in Yemen

ADEN (Agencies) — A team of Arab, American and French military officials arrived here Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to separate rival northern and southern troops and prevent Yemen from sliding towards civil war.

They arrived after an appeal by U.S. President Bill Clinton for an end to the feud between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and southern Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh.

The quarrel has brought the Arabian peninsula's most populous country and first multi-party democracy to the brink of civil war.

The mediating team arrived in Aden as a military source in Sanaa said a southern Yemeni military aircraft has been shot

down by rival northern troops stationed in the south. The MiG-21 fighter "was shot down by ground fire on Monday evening when a group of (southern) planes tried to carry out provocative sorties over the camp of the (northern) second armoured brigade at Al Raha in Lahj," the source told Reuters.

Mr. Beidh accused President Saleh of planning to circle southern army units.

Northern "troops are being deployed and reinforcements are on the move to circle some (southern) military units" stationed in the north, Mr. Beidh told mediators late Monday in Aden.

Former North and South Yemen united in May 1990.

Although their armies were never merged, several units were switched over to opposite sides of the former border.

Mr. Beidh condemned the fighting last week between rival troops in Amran, 60 kilometres north of Sanaa, as "a crime and high treason."

The clashes left 79 dead and 119 wounded, according to official northern figures.

The so-called joint military commission, led by northern Colonel Ali Saleh, includes defence advisers from Jordan and Oman, and American and French military attaches.

On Monday it persuaded northern troops to lift their six-day siege of remnants of the southern third brigade.

Self-rule deal draws mixed reactions in Jordan street

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Mixed feelings characterised Palestinians' and Jordanians' reaction on Tuesday towards the signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreement on autonomy for the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

The signing ceremony, scheduled to take place today in Egypt, appeared to have stirred powerful emotions in people.

"This is a major step for us. It's the beginning of a thorny path that we have to take. Despite all difficulties that lie ahead I think it is the best thing that has happened here," said Iman Amer, a Palestinian housewife.

Israel and the PLO will sign the agreement on Palestinian self-rule after over six months of negotiations. The autonomy accord would "give the Palestinian people for the first time the right to have a hand in its own destiny on its own territory," says the declaration of principles Israel and the PLO signed on Sept. 13.

Under the declaration of principles, Palestinians in the occupied territories will have autonomy for five years, pending the results of permanent status negotiations slated to begin not later than

the third year. Ibrahim Quba'a, member of the Palestine Central Council, described the signing of the accord as the beginning of yet many more celebrations to come.

"It is the birth of a new Palestinian state and the death of an old Zionist one," Mr. Quba'a said, adding that the new Palestinian entity "will be a model of democracy and progress in the 21st century."

He added that the timing of the signing of the Cairo agreement coincides with the victory of Nelson Mandela in South Africa in elections after years of oppression. He drew symbolic links between the end of the apartheid in South Africa and the "first step towards total independence for Palestinians."

Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb told the Jordan Times that he was not comfortable with the "ambiguity" of the agreement which he said was "not up to my expectations" as information about many issues involved is being withheld. Mr. Abul Ragheb also expressed disappointment at the lack of coordination between Jordan and the PLO.

He said the Palestinians should focus more on benefiting from the international support offered to them and described the agreement as "too fast with too little accomplishments."

A former government official who asked not to be named said: "We are going to

witness the emergence of yet another Arab bureaucracy across our borders." He described the PLO leadership's style of handling decision-making as a "one-man rule syndrome which characterises the nature of the peace talks and the signing of the self-rule agreement."

According to the former official, the process did not include representation of all Palestinian sectors.

"This is indicative of the nature of the ruling authorities in Gaza and Jericho once self-rule is established," the former official asserted.

Rana Jabl, a student at the University of Jordan, said that she was very pessimistic about the shape of the future of the Palestinians.

"Despite what they say about this being our last chance for peace, I do not believe that we are well-equipped to deal with the situation in a positive manner," said Ms. Jabl, adding that the whole peace process was nothing but a "bundle of concessions."

Sawsan Shunnar, a Palestinian human rights activist, said there are "uncertainties and no solid grounds" in the agreement.

"I have a gut feeling that things will not work the way we want them to," Ms. Shunnar said. "All signs indicate that the peace progress is moving in a direction that is not in Palestinians' best interests."

Syria:

(Continued from page 1)
said towns and villages destroyed by Israel would need to be rebuilt.

Mr. Assad's proposal was a response to an Israeli package, carried to Damascus by Mr. Christopher last Saturday, that offered a phased, partial Israeli pullout.

The package did not meet Mr. Assad's demand for total return of the land. But Mr. Assad found enough in it that was promising to send Mr. Christopher to Jerusalem with a counter offer.

Mr. Christopher said he plans to return to the Middle East in mid-May to continue coaxing the peace process along.

"It's more detailed than it was before," Mr. Christopher said of the Syrian offer.

Even so, Israel and Syria have begun laying the groundwork for a total Israeli pullout from the Golan Heights as part of a peace treaty between the two longtime foes.

They are bargaining over the timing of a withdrawal, security arrangements and uprooting of most if not all the 13,000 Jewish settlers, diplomatic officials disclosed Monday night.

Deputies rush through law

(Continued from page 1)
tax from 10 to seven per cent.

The House will resume its debate of the draft law today amidst expectations it will approve most of the remaining articles in a speedy way as both the Financial Committee and the government are on agreement over them.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Affairs Committee at the House discussed the new entry and exit procedures for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza with Interior Minister Salameh Hamad.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that the committee expressed satisfaction with the answers Mr. Hamad provided to their questions, which dealt with the impact of the new procedures

on Palestinians and the motivations behind them.

The Upper House of Parliament, the Senate, on Tuesday returned a draft law on municipalities to the House after amending it to have half the members of the Greater Amman Municipal Council appointed by the government.

The amended article corresponds with the original drafting of the legislation that was presented by the government to the House during its first ordinary session which ended in May. But the House is expected to hold firm on its stand, insisting that two thirds of the council be elected.

Israel reserves final say in deal

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli definition of security — a direct result of the first Cairo agreement signed last January.

Under the accord, the Palestinian police force is obliged to prevent Palestinian infiltrations and "terrorist attacks." But the agreement does not specify whether it is authorised to detain Israeli civilians regardless of the conditions.

Annex II refers to "terrorist" acts from source. The proposed security arrangements in Gaza and Jericho clearly stipulate that Palestinian police "will enforce special security measures aimed at preventing infiltrations across the delineating line or the introduction into the security perimeters if any arms, ammunitions or related equipment."

But the agreements do not allow the Palestinian police to prevent "terrorist" acts from the Israeli side.

According to the Rules of Conduct, which have sparked internal controversy within the leadership's ranks in Tunis, the Palestinian police cannot detain an Israeli regardless of the situation.

"The police shall not detain or arrest Israelis and under no circumstances place them in custody or in prison," the first item under Rules of Conduct states.

Palestinian police can only check Israeli pedestrian identification cards and ask for car licences of Israeli-plate cars.

The role of the joint patrols and joint mobile units, each of which will consist of two four-wheel vehicles, largely depends on the area of operation.

The agreement and its annexes state that in areas controlled by Palestinians, the Palestinian vehicle leads while in other areas the Israeli vehicle is in charge.

What remains unclear is the decisive issue of legal jurisdiction that will determine the terms of reference for the Palestinian police and the Palestinian authority.

Although Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin were supposed to have resolved this sensitive issue, any vague agreement will mean that Israeli law will effectively be the main source of legal jurisdiction, further undermining the role of the Palestinian authority, Palestinian officials fear.

Israel allows more expellees to return

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel has granted permission to 65 more Palestinian deportees to return to the occupied territories this week to coincide with the signing of the autonomy agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Wednesday, Palestinian sources said Tuesday.

The sources said most of the 65 were believed to be staunch supporters of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fatah group and a few others were either independent or belonging to the Palestine People's Party or FIDA, the political group founded by PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abu Rabbo.

A few of the returnees will be crossing the King Hussein Bridge, perhaps on Wednesday, and others will enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing from Egypt, said one source.

Khaled Mismar, a spokesman for the PLO mission here, was quoted as saying by the AP that the 15 Palestinians will cross the King Hussein Bridge on Wednesday.

The sources could not provide a full list of the 65, but said not all of them were given Israeli permission at the Cairo negotiations on implementing autonomy.

"There are other channels of communications between Israel and Tunis," where the PLO is headquartered said one source, in an implicit reference to what many Palestinians see as collusion between Israel and the PLO to ensure that enough Fatah fighters are in place in the occupied territories by the time autonomy starts there.

The 65 are the latest Palestinian deportees given permission by the Israelis to return home after the Middle East peace process was launched in Madrid in September 1991.

They will raise to nearly 200 the total number of deportees — not including family members — allowed to return home after the Madrid conference.

In addition, around 30 Palestinians who fled the occupied territories to evade capture after the intifada broke out in December 1987 have also been allowed to return home.

The process of return is expected to be speeded up after the Cairo agreement is signed on Wednesday, said one source, referring to the record Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Mr. Arafat

are expected to formalise in the Egyptian capital.

Meanwhile, an unknown number of PLO officials entered the occupied territories across the King Hussein Bridge and the Rafah crossing on Tuesday to finalise preparations for the deployment of the police force of the autonomy.

"It is very important to ensure that there is a smooth transition of duties and responsibilities," said the source. However, it is highly unlikely that there will be any physical handover of posts or stations by the Israelis to the police.

"By the time the policemen move, the Israelis will be long gone," said the source.

PLO officials have said that between 300 and 500 Palestinian policemen, members of the Palestine Liberation Army who underwent police training in Jordan, were poised to move into Jericho as early as Thursday.

According to PLO officials here, there are between 1,500 and 2,000 Palestinian policemen in Jordan and up to 1,000 in Iraq awaiting moving orders into the occupied territories.

"Their deployment will be gradual," said one official. "The logistics of their movements have to be closely coordinated with the Israelis."

However, the first batch is expected to go in with full ceremony, in a PLO bid to instil confidence among the Palestinians in the occupied territories that the Sept. 13 autonomy accord is working.

Israel has agreed to allow a 9,000-strong police force to take charge of internal security in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, the territories that come under autonomy in the first phase of the landmark Sept. 13 accord signed in Washington.

The AFP reported from the occupied Gaza Strip that 1,000 Palestinian policemen will arrive in the occupied Gaza Strip Thursday after the self-rule accord has been signed. The contingent, currently based at El Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, will enter the strip from Egypt via the Rafah border crossing.

Earlier on Thursday 11 Senior PLO officers will arrive in Gaza from Egypt. They will join General Ziad Arafat and Farouk Amin in a 13-strong Palestinian liaison group due to arrange the security transfer with the Israeli army.

Mr. Amin was the highest-ranking Palestinian in the Israeli police force before he resigned in 1988 following the start of the intifada.

Israel pressed to negotiate nuclear arms in Doha talks

DOHA (Agencies) — Israel came under pressure on Tuesday to accept negotiation on the future of its nuclear weapons as part of confidence-building measures to lessen future military tensions in the Middle East.

On the eve of the signing of a key agreement in Cairo on a Palestinian self-rule authority in Gaza and Jericho, the Jewish state was warned by Arabs that its nuclear programme may eventually torpedo any hard-won peace with its neighbours.

Qatar delighted Israelis by letting them into the country for the first time for arms control talks and dangled the carrot of lucrative Gulf business when it talked to them earlier of a future gas pipeline.

It told them on Tuesday that their nuclear arms were a threat not just to peace in the region but to the world.

"We demand that all states of the region adhere to the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, while submitting their nuclear installations... for inspection," Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Al Thani said.

He was opening a three-day conference on arms control to prepare for a conflict-free Middle East.

Conference sources said as the talks opened Israel remained reluctant to bring its nuclear programme into the negotiations spawned by the 1991 Madrid peace conference.

The Jewish state does not openly admit that it owns atomic arms but has so far failed to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and refused to open its facilities to international inspectors.

The sources said it was arguing that weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear, chemical and biological arms, should not be discussed in the absence from the negotiations of major regional players like Syria, Iran and Iraq.

"Some issues are too early to be discussed because not all the states in the region are involved in the process," Yossi Draznin of the Israeli defence ministry told Reuters.

More than 40 states, including Israel and most Arab countries, were taking part in the multilateral talks.

Israel tightens 'open-fire' orders in occupied lands

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers have been given new orders not to shoot at Palestinians unless they are in "real danger" and to let them celebrate freely after Wednesday's signing of the autonomy deal, an army spokesman said.

However, the army intends to cut off the main roads into the West Bank and Gaza Strip to prevent Jewish settlers from protesting against the launch of self-rule.

Central region commander General Ilan Biran has instructed units in the occupied territories not to use live bullets "except in cases where a real and obvious danger exists."

"We are entering a complicated and sensitive period," the spokesman said.

"We have to avoid endangering the lives of the local people, Jews and Arabs."

"Joyous celebrations and demonstrations have to be allowed but only inside localities or settlements and not on main roads."

The use of rubber bullets and tear-gas was still authorised.

However, troops captured two Palestinians from Fatah in

Nabulus on Tuesday.

Ten Jewish settlers were arrested and three hurt during protests around Jericho, which is set to become an autonomous Palestinian enclave, police said.

Demonstrators torched tyres and halted traffic outside two settlements on the main Jordan Valley road north of Jericho.

"Rabin resign," chanted settlers who sat down in the middle of the road.

Police dragged 10 of them away, including a rabbi, while three were lightly hurt in scuffles.

One of the organisers, Avihel Israeli, said the demonstration was intended "to stop Rabin from surrendering to Yasser Arafat."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat have still to agree on the size of the Jericho enclave although the signing ceremony for an accord to launch autonomy is scheduled for Wednesday.

"For us every square kilometre of the Jordan Valley is precious because our safety depends on it," Mr. Israeli said.

Jordan to attend Cairo signing

(Continued from page 1)

A senior Jordanian official told the Jordan Times on Monday that Jordan had sent a letter regretting that it would not be able to attend the ceremony. A PLO official also confirmed that the organisation had received a negative reply from the Kingdom.

It was not immediately clear what caused the change of heart between late Monday and Tuesday. According to well-informed sources, Dr. Majali himself was arguing for a Jordanian representation at the ceremony, especially that 45 other foreign ministers from around the world were scheduled to attend.

Jordan had intended to use the occasion to register its growing displeasure at the low level of co-ordination by the

PLO with Jordan over decisions that ultimately affect vital Jordanian interests.

The Kingdom also believed that attending the meeting would contradict a vow to suspend its active role in Middle East peace negotiations until it finalised an agreement with Washington whereby inspections of vessels heading to Aqaba would be conducted by Lloyd's Register of London.

Dr. Majali, according to the sources, had argued that with 43 foreign ministers attending the signing ceremony "Jordan's presence can be treated like that of any of these countries."

According to the sources, the premier also believed that Jordan's absence would cause "more embarrassment for the Kingdom than would serve its purpose."

Other sources said that at least one other factor figured in the decision of the government to attend the Cairo meeting. After several delays the Joint Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Committee was scheduled to begin talks here Thursday headed by Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki and Dr. Majali.

"If only to show good will to this scheduled meeting, Jordan probably could not have boycotted a ceremony hosted by Egypt," a well-informed analyst said.

PLO sources also said Tuesday that the organisation had insisted on Jordanian attendance till the time the decision was taken by the Cabinet and that the PLO would have liked Jordan's prime minister to be present at the signing ceremony.

Majali: No Aqaba arrangement yet

(Continued from page 1)

The prime minister underlined the need for ending inter-Arab differences and "to open a new chapter, particularly at this critical stage."

Dr. Majali said it was essential that the Arabs assume an effective role in any regional order.

He said features of the "new world order" were not yet clear enough, nor are those of the regional Arab order.

"The only clear thing is that the United States is dominating the world under the new order," he added.

Dr. Majali said "There is no room under the new order for spectators" and emphasised the need for effective Arab input in shaping this order.

Dr. Majali said Jordan's participation in the multilateral peace talks has been reduced

to an observer status to protest the continued blockade of Aqaba port. He noted that multilateral talks are meant to address economic and social problems.

On the Palestinian-Israeli accord, Dr. Majali said what was taking place between the Palestinians and Israelis was an affair concerning the two parties.

"We shall accept what the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, accepts," he said. "However, we do not want the results of any accord to negatively affect us."

He added that Jordan had hoped for greater Jordanian-Palestinian co-ordination, given the unique, brotherly, historical relations between the two peoples.

COLUMN

Mrs. Clinton goes grocery shopping

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton did some grocery shopping Monday, spending \$15.50 on a basket of staples and treats, including low-fat sour cream, tuna fish, and an exotic Mexican root.

"I'm just delighted to be in a store," the first lady said at a supermarket where she made a plea for health reform. "Even when my husband was governor I'd go to the store and I felt like a normal person and my daughter and I would go up and down the aisles and we'd buy things and we'd take it home and cook it," she said. "I know this sounds funny, especially for the women in the audience, that you would ever miss going to the store, buying things and taking them home and cooking them. But trust me, you would," she said.

Accompanied by Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's non-voting delegate to Congress, Mrs. Clinton spent 10 minutes shopping in the huge supermarket, carrying her purchases in a red basket. They included rice, beans, a plain bagel, two biscotti, a mango, the low-fat sour cream, a salad, a passila pepper and a jicama, the fleshy root of a Mexican vine, used for mixtures into which Americans dip dry biscuits or vegetables — usually go with drinks. She took a \$20 bill from her purse to pay for the purchases.

Reward leads to 200 tips on vanished assets

BERLIN (AP) — Offer a reward, and the tips will come especially if the reward is a fat 5 million marks, equivalent to \$3,012,000. The commission searching for vanished assets of the defunct East German Communist Party said Monday it has received more than 200 tips since it started advertising the reward several weeks ago. About half the tips contain "very detailed information," said Hans-Juergen Papier, head of the commission. Many of the tips are being taken seriously, including about 25 from Switzerland. The big reward will be divided among those offering the most helpful clues. Swiss prosecutors and German investigators are working together on two cases to uncover about 500 million marks (\$300 million) believed to have been transferred to Switzerland, Papier said. Since German unification in 1990, authorities have failed to corral hundreds of millions of marks of East German assets that should have gone to the national treasury. The reformer successor of the Communist Party, called the Party for Democratic Socialism, is in negotiations with the commission on handing over its assets. Mr. Papier said the party has frozen financial assets of 843 million marks (\$508 million) and other properties worth several hundred million marks. In addition to the missing assets of the ruling East German party, it is believed that about 20 billion marks (\$12 billion) were lost to various frauds after unification, Mr. Papier said.

Beijing eases one-child rule for divorcees

HONG KONG (AFP) — The Beijing authorities have decided to ease China's restrictive birth control policy, by allowing remarried couples to have their own child, it was reported Tuesday. A remarried couple can seek permission from the Beijing Family Planning Committee to have another child even if they had children from previous marriages, the semi-official Hong Kong China News Service said. Under Chinese law, each family can only have one child. The government has been very concerned to stop a further explosion of the 1.2 billion population. The new measure was adopted following a survey by the Family Planning Committee which showed that 34 to 40 per cent of remarried couples want children of their own. The committee decided to bend the birth control policy in urban areas to help remarried couples maintain emotional ties and stabilise the new family. The committee said the move could benefit 2,359 couples who remarried between 1992-93. It added that an additional 300 to 500 children each year would not adversely affect the city's family planning.

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